Discard

The Congregationalist

RY PICTURES. 1334.
K EDITION.

DEPARTURE OF THE MAYFLOWER.

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Great praise has come to those of Plymouth town
Who, halved by death, stood sad atop Town Hill
While the Mayflower, stranger-crewed, dropped down
The sea's slope to home; all saints were steadfast still.
I grant small praise: though cranberries and clams
Please the tongue less than clotted cream and beef,
And green fields of home with sheep and lambs
Are kinder to the eye than dead oak leaf;
Still, they had no choice. Therefore I cannot praise
Those in whose ears the great cry of freedom's voice
Whelmed the sweet call of home and softer days.
This was their music, and they had no choice.
No more have we. No credit shall be ours
If we stand fast when foes storm freedom's towers.

HARRY R. BUTMAN, D.D.

VOLUME 4 APRIL, 1961 NUMBER 4

"Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free." — Galatians 5:1

SEPARATION AND SPIRITUAL UNITY

Rev. Erwin A. Britton, Wayne, Michigan

In the light of the San Francisco proposals to begin the processes for a unification of Protestantism under the banner of "The Reformed and Catholic Church of America," it is profitable to harken back to a statement issued by the Uniting General Synod of the United Church of Christ in 1957. This statement has been repeated in recent literature defending the union. The statement is this: "At this moment of joyous new access of life imparted by the union, The United Church of Christ is stricken in conscience at its continuing separation from the rest of the Church, and it prays for the day when the greater Church of Jesus Christ, now hindered and weakened by many divisions, will come to visible reality, one flock, one shepherd, through the influence of One who is alive in every part of His Church."

Here is strange reasoning indeed for Protestants and curious logic. Apparently a straw man, "separation," must be set up in order that the union may be justified and that a plea may be made for further organizational unification leading ultimately, I presume — although the signers did not say so — all the way to Rome. If the avowed intention is not to go that far, at least the logic inescapably points that way. In any case, San Francisco looms as a significant milestone on the road to Rome.

Not Conscious Of Separation

Perhaps my lack of enthusiasm for the merger is to be found in the fact that, for some odd reason, I have never felt a "separation from the rest of the Church." Will someone explain this "separation" to me, for, truthfully, I cannot grasp it! My own experience fails to encompass it. For twenty summers, as an exchange pastor, I have preached five Sundays in our local Methodist Church, with only a feeling of "oneness" for my Christian brethren — which feeling, I am sure, has been reciprocated. I have preached in our local Episcopal Church and have shared in various other services with our Episcopal brethren, being drawn again into an experience of spiritual unity. One Sunday, I occupied the pulpit of a fundamental Gospel Tabernacle, yet, so far as I could see, neither preacher nor listener was aware of any "separateness," though our theological and liturgical orientation was greatly divergent. Last summer I was guest minister for a Southern Baptist church in Georgia, and again I was deeply conscious of our shared faith. As a member of the worshipping group, I have been drawn to an experience of oneness with a Roman Catholic congregation as we shared the grandeur and loveliness of a Christmas Eve Mass; and I have felt the Spirit's presence in the quietness of a Quaker Meeting.

For a decade I have shared many experiences on many occasions with members of the Evangelical and Reformed Church, and I rejoice in the high sense of devotion and of churchmanship which members of that communion have brought to the parish which I now serve.

On no occasion when time and circumstances brought any of these aforementioned relationships to an end, did I feel "conscience-stricken" that I should return to minister to that branch of Christ's church bearing the name, tradition and the polity known as Congregational.

Unity of Spirit

Rather have I rejoiced within the unity of Spirit, held in the bond of peace, that together we have had such fellowship with those who bear Christ's name, diverse as our ways may be. Herein is the strength of our churches, not their weakness! To attempt to translate that spiritual unity into an organizational unity creates unnecessary and innumerable difficulties, but what is more important, it achieves exactly nothing in terms of positive advance for the Kingdom of God. Perhaps, even, worse, it results in disunity, even as the efforts in this attempted union with the Evangelical and Reformed Church have already achieved disunity within our own fellowship and theirs.

Not In An Institution

I find myself in profound agreement with Professor Walter Marshall Horton when, in his book on ecumenical theology, he writes, "The Ecumenical Movement is right in its aspiration to recover the unity of the broken body of Christ; but if it tries to do so by merging the existing church institutions into one great institution, it will repeat the error of Rome and miss its mark completely. The real *Ecclesia* is not an institution at all, but a free fellowship serving God and men as prompted by the spirit of Christ. The YMCA and the 'non-church' movement in Japan may come closer to the real Ecclesia than any ecclesiastical institutions.

"An age 'when men are hungering and thirsting after fellowship as never before' senses this, and persists in preferring the less formal expressions of Christianity to its more stately institutional expressions — unless indeed it seeks refuge in Christian collectivism for the same reason that it does in the totalitarian state."

I find a charter for the varieties of churchmanship evidenced in Protestantism from Paul's first letter to the Corinthians, twelfth chapter: "For the body does not consist of one member, but many . . . If all were a single organ, where would the body be? . . . Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same spirit; and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord, and there are varieties of working but it is the same God who inspires them all in every one."

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OUR DEVOTIONAL COLUMN

Rev. Carl M. Gates, Claremont, California

Theme For The Month: The Experience of Eternal Life

Suggested Readings: John 17: 1-3, Colossians 1: 26-28

Everyone knows that love and fellowship are not bound by distance or time. The members of a family may be on opposite sides of the earth from each other and still be together in spirit. In fact all the best things in life — its thoughts, feelings, hopes, aspirations, victories — reach out far beyond physical conditions. Some of the greatest battles ever fought are fought and won in sick rooms, and some of the most beautiful service ever rendered is rendered by those who often feel themselves useless because they cannot go about doing good.

"We live in deeds, not years; in thoughts, not breaths;
In feelings, not in figures on a dial.
We should count time by heart throbs. He most lives
Who thinks most, feels the noblest, acts the best."

And this kind of life, the life that is lived for ends that are bigger and finer than mere bodily existence, the Bible calls eternal life. "This is life eternal, that they might know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent."

Eternal life, then, is not something that we enter on when our earthly life is over; we can experience it every day.

Through prayer, in daily communion with God, we can, if we will, live even now the life that is "hid with Christ in God," and that is eternal life. "Easter," someone has said, "is not something which happened once and for all. It is an experience which keeps repeating itself in human hearts." When one journeys day by day in the joy and power of the indwelling Christ; when strength thus rises above weakness and victory emerges from defeat, then, in the truest sense, it is Easter, for eternal life has become a present reality.

We cannot picture the conditions under which the eternal life will be lived after death, but for those who have been living it here on earth the new experience will certainly not be strange, but rather the continuation on a higher plane of the best we have known already, growth in grace and in the understanding of spiritual realities, closer and closer fellowship with God and those whom we love, the joy of sharing in the creative activity of God himself.

Death is still shrouded in mystery, but the Christian faith meets it with the triumphant assertion: "It is not yet made manifest what we shall be. We know that, if He shall be manifested, we shall be like Him: for we shall see Him as he is."

Prayer: Almighty and Everlasting God, in whom we live and move and have our being, who hast created us for Thyself, so that our hearts are restless till they find rest in Thee, grant unto us purity of heart and strength of purpose so that no selfish passion may hinder us from knowing Thy will, and no weakness from doing it. In Thy light we see life clearly, and in Thy service find perfect freedom. For Thy mercy's sake. Amen." (*John Watson*)

E & R LEADER PROPOSES DELAY

With the next meeting of the General Synod less than four months off, a prominent E & R official has proposed delay in uniting the two denominations. In a letter sent to all pastors in his communion, Dr. William L. Rest, President of the North Illinois Synod, tells of the misgivings of many E & R leaders, who after expressing their doubts add "But we will have to go through with it now." He raises the question "Is there anything we can do which will not wreck the merger?"

Stating that "even the most optimistic feel that the 'utmost dispatch' will mean a generation or two so far as Associations are concerned," Dr. Rest believes that the uniting of the Boards without waiting for the whole denomination to be organized means that the General Synod will become "a mere rubber stamp for the action of the Boards, where the real power is now being placed."

He also notes that "No one in responsible position has yet stated, 'Win or lose, the outcome of the lawsuit will have no effect on the United Church'. If we should lose all or part of it, what will be the effect on the Congregational Boards who are a party to the suit?" He therefore urges that the Synods postpone voting until after 1961, so that these matters may be settled before union is completed.

THE RETURN OF THE MAYFLOWER

Our cover picture this month is the familiar one of the Pilgrims on the shore watching the departure of the Mayflower for home. After a Winter of untold hardships and losses, they were faced with the opportunity of returning or of remaining to enjoy the freedom of their own Church, for which they had crossed the seas. Now we, their spiritual descendants, are faced with a similar choice. Shall we embark on a return voyage and go back into One Great Church, from which the Pilgrims broke away? Or shall we too stand firm in the belief in freedom which we have cherished for many years? The choice is ours. Which shall we choose?

In Memoriam

Rev. Clarence B. Roberts, 84, pastor of Emmanuel Congregational Church of Egg Harbor City, New Jersey, since 1910, died at his home on December 20, 1960. He had been named Citizen of the Year in 1953, by the local post of the Veterans of Foreign Wars. Services were held in Emmanuel Church on December 23, and interment was in Greenmont Cemetery, West Chester, Pennsylvania.

WOMEN'S WORK

MRS. ROBERT E. COLLINS, Chairman
1014 FLORAL DRIVE, S.E., GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN

A Man Joins the Commission

Rev. Leonard H. Maunder, Maywood, Illinois

A man, writing the page on Women's Work in THE CONGREGATIONALIST? Frankly, it does not seem nearly as strange to me as it might have seemed a month or two ago. That would be, of course, before I, a man, became a member of the Commission on Women's Work. I am a member of that Commission because a member of the Executive Committee has always been a consulting member. When Mrs. Mead, the only representative of the fair sex on the Executive Committee, was co-opted by the Commission on the Ministry, I, in a moment of sheer insanity, volunteered to take her place. Now, having sat in on a session of this Commission, and having gone through my baptism of fire, I have a new enthusiasm for the dedication and the "know-how" of this Women's Commission and find nothing strange about the philosophy and practical aspects of Women's Work, and am glad to point up a few things which we, on the Commission, believe are important.

This conviction did not come about without some qualms. What was a man, and a minister at that, supposed to do on an all-women Commission? Give the opening prayer? Keep them from going off on innumerable tangents of triviality? Tell them what to do, and how to do it?

Or perhaps silently, just shed a benevolent ministerial glow over any and all proceedings? The answers to my questions came quickly. When I walked into the first meeting where a dozen intelligent, well-poised, competent women sat around a board table, it became apparent in a few moments that while I obviously could not be just "one of the girls," nevertheless, I was expected to become a hard-working member of the Commission. From the opening devotions — conducted, incidentally, by the Chairman herself — through the complete and well-organized agenda, the male member was given the same courteous treatment as every other member received. Like every other member he was commended for a good idea, criticized constructively for a bad one, and smiled at tolerantly for a stupid one. So now, with my role clearly established, I entered into the work of the Commission and without thinking it strange at all, accepted the assignment to write this page.

Not the Commission Alone

Women's Work is not the work of this Commission alone. It is women at work, doing all kinds of things, in every member-Church of the National Association. It is a large group of women in one of our larger Churches completely organized and willing and able to undertake a large project in their local community, or to extend themselves to a project in India, in Alaska, on the East Coast or the West Coast of our own land, wherever there is need.

It is also smaller groups, sometimes organized formally, and sometimes just meeting informally, needing advice, information and help. All of them, however, a part of the greatest work force that the National Association has. The purpose of the Commission is to establish contact between these groups. One of the things that this writer admired most was the realistic way these women hammered out a philosophy of relationship.

In this whole fellowship, from the local Church to the central core which is the Commission, freedom in the Congregational tradition had to prevail. Again and again the Commission came to a dead stop and started over again when it entered into what seemed to be the area of formulating policy, establishing programs for a local Church to follow, or when it appeared that the Commission was setting itself up as a propaganda arm for anybody or any program. The Commission is and will be a purely advisory body. To the Commission, as the central core in the fellowship of Congregational women throughout the country, will come, not only ideas which make the work in the local Church more effective, but ideas for cooperative efforts on a regional and national basis. From the Commission will go informative material on programming, devotions, local projects and national activity. It is true that this whole philosophy is held together only by a deep sense of fellowship, but tenuous as it sometimes seems, there is confidence that the "rope of sand" will hold.

The Problems of Communication

One of the real problems is the whole matter of communication. We are a young fellowship, separated sometimes from fellow workers and sympathizers by great distances. This very fact sharpens up the necessity of contact between the Commission and the Churches, and between the Churches themselves. Presently, THE CONGREGATIONALIST is the medium through which this contact can be made, and much valuable information will be made available in its pages. Women are urged to read this publication. Names of key women in the local Churches, put into the hands of the Commission would help greatly in this process of contact and dissemination of information. These key women would include those who have special interests and abilities in certain fields, such as Missions, Church Extension, Christian Education or who are particularly adept with projects in the local Church. Presently, the Commission is making a complete revision of the roster of leaders and organizations. Names and addresses of key women in each local Church sent to the Chairman of the Commission would help.

The Commission is dedicated to the job of getting advice and suggestions on practical working ideas out of the local Churches. I have before me as I write, a list of assignments given to members of the Commis-

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LOYAL CONGREGATIONALISTS AND THE COURTS

(Two Comments on the Article "The Obligation of the Loyal Congregationalist" in our February issue.)

I. By Mr. Harold C. Bailey, West Hartford, Connecticut

It has been suggested in these pages by an intelligent and spiritually sensitive minister, Rev. A. A. Rouner, Jr., that it is a violation of the covenant relationship for a minority to insist upon continuing the Congregational witness after a majority has entered the United Church of Christ.

What is the Covenant relationship? Mr. Rouner has well described it as an agreement "to walk together . . . in the ways of the Lord . . . and to seek His will and not our own." But implicit in every such covenant is the special emphasis, common to all Congregational Churches throughout the world, upon the absolute independence and completeness of each such particular Church. This underlying foundation of the covenant has since the early 1600s been so generally understood and universally accepted that any explicit statement of it in such covenants has been unnecessary. This principle, therefore, constitutes an inseparable part of all our covenants.

Who Breaks The Covenant?

When a Congregational Church becomes divided, one portion of the Church has broken this covenant. We must regard such a breach as a serious matter — a disruption and destruction of "this sacred fellowship which Christ has created." In the contemporary situation which faction is responsible for what Mr. Rouner terms a destruction of "the body of Christ"? Can it be the faithful minority loyal to the whole covenant, heart-broken over the defection of fellow-members into another denomination of Christ's universal Church, apprehensive over the impaired ability of the diminished Church to carry forward its work and witness? To ask the question is to answer it in the negative. Here, then, is a diminished Church trying to follow the will of Christ as it has been understood among us for more than three centuries. There is an implication in the Rouner article, however, that with us, at least, "Christ makes His will known most surely in the congregation." Does this imply that whatever the majority of the members at any particular time amid any circumstances decide to do is *ipso facto* an expression of the will of Christ? This seems an undue idealization of the Church Meeting today.

Quite obviously, it seems to me, it is the "Yes-voting" members who have broken the covenant by denying the validity of a portion of it and moving into an authoritarian denomination.

The Law and Justice

The sole question that remains is whether the faithful adherents to the whole covenant may be deprived of the property hitherto used by them. Here again no one has yet attempted to demonstrate that the faithful element ought to forfeit their property merely because a departing majority want to carry it away with them.

The ecclesiastical and civil law has been soundly formulated to do justice. If the true situation were as Mr. Rouner describes it, namely that the faithful minority must yield as gracefully as possible, the faithful members would be faced with two harsh and unChristian alternatives: a. to surrender their conscientious convictions and subject themselves to the jurisdiction of another denomination, or, b. to flee like refugees into some other Congregational Church. Such a minority has done absolutely nothing to justify such hostile action against them by any ecclesiastical group. And the law, properly, will not permit it.

II. By Rev. Harold E. Le May, Eliot, Maine

I appreciate Mr. Rouner's spirit and most of his interpretation of the meaning of Congregationalism in his article in the February issue of THE CONGREGATIONALIST.

However, he has missed the point regarding those who vote to unite with the United Church of Christ. In joining, they are leaving their Congregational Church to become members of another denomination. Their act brings up the question as to whether they have the moral right to take with them property and funds which were given by people who believed they were to be used for the Congregational (New Testament) Way of freedom and fellowship under Christ. Those who remain loyal Congregationalists are carrying on their Way and endeavoring faithfully to administer the property and funds as trustworthy executors. As loyal Congregationalists they are under obligation to do this. There should be no need to demand or use legal means to hold what has been entrusted to them. Those who go into another denomination and cease to be our fellow Congregationalists are the ones who should seek legal advice before taking property and funds which they intend to use in another denomination which is not Congregational.

I have no objection to anyone becoming a member of another denomination if he believes that it will strengthen his Christian life. Other denominations have their places in the interpreting of the Christian life and message which would be lost under "One Church."

God did not create us all alike but does expect a unity in spirit as we worship and serve Him (John 17: 20-23). The body of Christ is "one" (I Cor. 12 and Ro. 12), but the various members have different duties and abilities which working together make a perfect whole — a living unity.

WOMEN'S WORK Continued

sion, which during the year will produce a great deal of new devotional material, mission projects, money-making ideas, and program suggestions.

Plans are being made for the women's part of the Annual Meeting at Cheyenne, Wyoming, in August. To a man, at least, they sound great. It will be a wonderful opportunity for the face-to-face fellowship we need. Plan on coming to Cheyenne, and begin that planning now.

When I went back to the Executive Committee and reported on the Commission on Women's Work, I became so enthusiastic that one of the members said, "Have you had some new revelation or something?" The question was a good one, for maybe that is exactly what happened. At any rate, I have a new awareness of the tremendous work force that the women of our Churches represent. A man on this Commission may be a new idea, but I like it and am going to stay as long as they will have me.

BISHOPS OVER CONGREGATIONAL CHURCHES?

Rev. Graham R. Hodges, Watertown, New York

How Mother Anglica must chuckle as a Presbyterian, Dr. Blake, calls for his group, plus the Methodists and Congregationalists, to return to the protection of her fold. "Ah, those children of mine, I told them from 150 to 300 years ago they couldn't get along without my bishops."

By now everybody must have read Dr. Eugene Carson Blake's plan as delivered at Grace Episcopal Cathedral, San Francisco and responded to by Bishop James A. Pike in the same service on December 4, 1960. I use the word "plan" deliberately instead of "proposal" for as one reads Dr. Blake's full address in the December 21, 1960 issue of THE CHRISTIAN CENTURY it is hard indeed to avoid the conclusion that he is setting out a broad framework within which the super church must be erected. And in the same issue of the CENTURY (was it just coincidence?) Bishop Pike reveals how his mind has changed or not changed. He says: "The coming great church will preserve what is good in our tradition, including the historic succession of bishops . . ."

So far, all right. We have no criticism of other's choices. But how do Congregationalists feel? Speaking for us, or rather for the still incomplete United Church of Christ, Dr. Fred Hoskins and Dr. James E. Wagner issued a statement on the spot indicating regret that Dr. Blake had ignored the Disciples in his plan because "meanwhile the United Church of Christ is committed to begin preliminary conversations with the International Convention of Christian Churches (Disciples) . . ."

Quick Work

How far we have gone, and how quickly! As one who voted in three General Councils and two General Synods for the United Church I cannot help but be appalled by the apparent readiness of Messrs. Wagner and Hoskins to take us, as quickly as possible, into a monolithic super church where our traditions would be like the Biblical flower and grass of the field.

And with the new Constitution eliminating local Church and Association delegates from General Synod, with the total number of Congregational delegates reduced from over 1600 to less than 500, with conference ministers able to select personally many delegates, a merger with the "Reformed and Catholic Church" could happen quickly indeed.

The Blake-Pike plan was not dropped suddenly. It was discussed and well known well ahead. Douglas Edwards on CBS TV news leaked it three days ahead. A high placed Methodist told me: "This thing had been worked over and talked over a long time." Then the National Council meeting was exploited to break it on the public.

Dr. Blake occupies a position of unquestioned authority in his own group. He runs his denomination. Hardly anybody seriously questions him. And now, by his enormous power, he can see that his plan is introduced in one presbytery after another and passed. He has the power to do just that, else he wouldn't have come out as he did.

How do we spiritual descendants of William Bradford and Pastor Robinson fit into this master plan? Should we be taken in, as our Co-Presidents seem to desire, Congregational Churches and ministers could be transferred, within a few years or a decade or so, from a system of freely associating and cooperating Churches with an admittedly intrenched bureaucracy, through the vestibule of Presbyterianism into the grand ballroom of Episcopacy, from which we were hounded 350 years ago for demanding "no bishop in the church." Almost overnight the Pilgrims' descendants and their "free" pastors would pay their respects to the bishops, with all their virtues and faults. And once in the door, who would let us out, or dare try to organize an escape party?

A Better Way

We will not venture here into the possible dangers of a super church with a few wealthy, Anglo-Saxon groups merging to present a common front to an aggressive Roman Catholicism and an indifferent secularism. Its aims might be fine; some of its fruits might be. I believe, however, that many if not all its goals might be better reached within increased cooperation, especially through Councils of Churches structure, and without sacrificing proven historic traditions.

I refer to such ventures as rapidly increased consolidations, closings, and federations where communities are over-churched; a frontal attack together on the big city; a common fund drive in America for $3 billion for foreign and home mission needs (witness Africa and Latin America); increased cooperation in publishing, TV, visual aids, and other "tool" endeavors.

Let our leaders concentrate on these cooperative ventures which will not tear us apart, with us retaining our heritage, our right to criticize constructively, our ability to think creatively and independently. Congregationalism has contributed immensely to America's religious and social riches. Dwight L. Moody, Jonathan Edwards, Lyman Beecher, Harriet Beecher Stowe, John Brown, Charles G. Finney — they were ours. Free public education, the Bill of Rights and Declaration of Independence, Negro education, foreign missions — they were largely ours in origin.

Adding The Big Church

Now, to Big Labor, Big Government, Big Business, Big Agriculture, we must add the tossed salad of Big Church, with the Congregationalists thrown in. Or will we be? Some say, yes, that is our destiny today.

Some would say: "But the churches would still own their property!" As if a church were mere property! What is property when pastors are trained, ordained, directed, and promoted from a central body? What is a building worth, or legacies, when the pastor is subject to higher ecclesiastical powers?

Is a Congregational Church congregational when its pastor is tightly tied into a national system? Hardly. In a thousand subtle ways a minister can be controlled, ways the average layman cannot dream of. A letter written or not written, a recommendation warm or

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Glorious Independents

Elizabeth Laughton Claxton, Lansing, Michigan

I. HENRY WARD BEECHER

Where but in an independent pulpit like that which he had established in Plymouth Church, Brooklyn, could Henry Ward Beecher have "sold" slaves in order legally to purchase their freedom from their owners? In his first sermon there, in 1847, as recorded by his son and son-in-law, he said, "I want you to understand distinctly that I will wear no fetters . . . that I will preach the gospel as I apprehend it" —*. Probably his own experiences in Indiana with the Old School Presbytery, and also memories of the trial of his father for heresy by the Synod in the Cincinnati area prompted his determination to be free of ecclesiastical shackles.

I wonder how many Congregational ministers throughout the country operated stations of the underground railway. I know of at least twelve in Michigan. In Green Bay, Wisconsin, the Rev. Jeremiah Porter actually hid a Negro father and his three children in the belfry of the old Congregational church for the greater part of a week.

Of course, no one family did more to help free the slaves than the Beechers. Harriet has told how most of the unforgettable characters in *Uncle Tom's Cabin* were portraits of real people she had known while visiting in the South, or people described to her by one or another of her six brilliant brothers.

How fortunate it was that her brother Edward, while president of little Illinois College, was not shot with the publisher, Elijah P. Lovejoy, when he was killed by a pro-slavery mob while defending his printing press! Only the night before the murder, Edward tells us in his "Narrative of Riots in Alton," he helped Lovejoy unload the press from a river boat. As readers of this paper we should be doubly thankful, for he lived to be one of the founders, in 1849, and the first editor of, THE CONGREGATIONALIST.

Picture courtesy of Plymouth Church of the Pilgrims, Brooklyn

In 1860 Henry Ward Beecher introduced ten year old slave girl "Pinky" to his congregation in the Plymouth Church of the Pilgrims, Brooklyn, N. Y. That Sunday $1,000.00 was raised to buy her freedom and in 1928, as Mrs. James Hunt, "Pinky" returned to retell her story from the same pulpit.

**Every Congregationalist who treasures the independent spirit should read* SAINTS, SINNERS AND BEECHERS *by Lyman Beecher Stowe, a book published by Bobbs-Merrill in 1934, from which much of the above information was gleaned.*

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lukewarm, a suggestion that he is a good pastor "but . . .", a hint that if he wants placement on a conference, diocese, or national board he might be more cooperative — all these can curb in a most real way. When one single Episcopal rector in New York City makes front page news all over America by refusing to read the letter from the House of Bishops you have some idea as to what system we might face.

I have warm friends among the clergy and bishops of these other groups. I treasure their friendship. I treasure the diversity which enables us to work together as friends in Christ without unity of organization. We could not work more closely nor love each other better were we in one church.

Is the fact that there are denominations really a scandal? This has been repeated until we are almost persuaded. Was Jesus referring to American denominations when he prayed that "they might all be one"? Some reply: "What else could he mean?"

Some say: "Look at the Church of South India!" I say, yes, let us look at it 50 years from now. By their fruits ye shall know them. America isn't India and India isn't America.

Whatever the virtues or dangers of any new super church, the statement of Co-Presidents Wagner and Hoskins indicates that they would like, as soon as possible, to lead Congregational Churches and their pastors into the huge denomination where the 10,000,000 Methodists and the 3,000,000 Episcopalians with their bishops are already at hand and the 3,000,000 Presbyterians, are ready to accept them, according to Dr. Blake.

Would not this most certainly be a complete change of polity and church government for the 1,400,000 Congregationalists — whisked almost directly from congregational polity into an entrenched episcopal polity? I can get no other impression. Let those who doubt read three documents: Dr. Blake's and Bishop Pike's in THE CHRISTIAN CENTURY of December 21 and those of Co-Presidents Hoskins and Wagner in THE UNITED CHURCH HERALD of December 29.

The Blake-Pike proposal-plan and the Wagner-Hoskins response indicate abundantly that there are plans to take Congregational Churches into an episcopal system. It is hard to believe, but read for yourself. And it can happen more quickly than you think.

CHURCH EXTENSION

Fair Oak Congregational Church

Robert H. Sterenborg, Cedar Rapids, Iowa

What began as a dream in September became a reality in February when 37 dedicated persons signed the covenant of the newly formed Fair Oak Congregational Church in Cedar Rapids, Iowa. Dr. Max Strang from Marshalltown, Moderator of the National Association, received the Charter Members into the new Church the morning of February 12th. Six youngsters and adults were baptised that same day.

Signing the Covenant

The Fair Oak Church was first dreamed of when two couples, Mr. and Mrs. Eugene Kelsey and Mr. and Mrs. Robert Sterenborg, felt the need for a Church that was in complete harmony with "true Congregationalism" in this the fastest growing city in Iowa. An inquiry revealed that others felt the same way. In October the Kelseys and the Sterenborgs journeyed to Maywood for the National Association meeting and outlined their desire before officers of the Association. The idea was favorably received.

Carrying with them words of encouragement from Maywood, the two couples returned to Cedar Rapids and issued an invitation to all those interested to attend an informal meeting. Twelve persons gathered together. Those 12 founded the new Church and have continued to meet, while adding to their group, every Tuesday night since that time to lay plans and solve the problems.

Services Begin

The Fair Oak Church held its first services on Sunday, January 8th, with the Rev. Willard Kime of Milwaukee as guest minister. Communion was received by the congregation of 47 from a communion set borrowed from a friendly Baptist Church. The services were held, as they are today, in the cafeteria of a grade school.

The new Church is looking forward to the day when it will have its own minister. In the meantime, guest ministers continue to fill the pulpit. In addition to Dr. Strang and Rev. Mr. Kime, other Congregational ministers who have visited the Fair Oak group are Rev. Walter Schilling of Des Moines and Rev. C. Earl Page of Spencer. Ministers of other denominations have also served.

A special blessing in the form of a building site was bestowed on the group when the developer of the new Fair Oaks Addition granted nearly three acres of choice land. The building site is at the top of a wooded slope overlooking nearly half the city and the members of the Church are in the process of purchasing two adjoining acres to make a five acre building site.

Sunday attendance averages between 50 and 60 and is growing weekly. A large number of these are persons who did not belong to a Church or who attended infrequently. Most of them have now been caught up in the tide of enthusiasm generated by the Fair Oak congregation and have become active workers.

Enthusiasm and Willingness Prevail

A visit with the Fair Oak group will turn up much evidence of enthusiasm and willingness to work. For example, the housewife who cares for her family and holds a full time job still finds the time to attend Tuesday night meetings, print the bulletins and serve on the Board of Trustees. Then there is the couple which has encouraged at least eight others to attend the new Church. Most of *those* are now members and are encouraging *others* to attend.

Watching a limited budget has led to improvising in many areas. The collection plates used each Sunday morning are aluminum pie plates with felt lining. But they work. Until recently, in the absence of song books, the hymns to be sung were mimeographed on sheets and passed out. But the singing was just as sweet.

A spokesman for the group recently stated, "We feel we have come a long way in a short time. We realize there is yet a long way to go, but we have definite aims. In addition to our membership program and our building program, we intend that the Fair Oak Church be a strong voice for the Continuation Movement and for the National Association. We feel we have a potential here in Cedar Rapids that is greater than anywhere else in America for the formation of a strong, truly Congregational Church. We intend to realize that potential . . . fully!"

With such confidence and enthusiasm, the Fair Oak Congregational Church of Cedar Rapids should be one to watch.

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION
PILGRIM FELLOWSHIP

Miss Marilyn Heaney, *Secretary*
Box 1003, Middlebury College, Middlebury, Vermont

Boys: This Will Interest You

An unusual opportunity for boys of high school age whose families wish to attend the National Association Annual Meeting at Cheyenne, Wyoming, is offered by the Gannett Peak Expedition, August 20 through September 2, 1961. Gannett Peak is near Lander and Dubois, Wyoming.

A maximum number of twelve boys can be admitted to this expedition, boys of physical fitness, leadership potential, adaptability to camp life, reverence for God, and good citizenship. They will travel on foot and by horseback forty miles beyond any civilization, and will re-create some of the best experience of the mountain men of the past who have made history. The total fee per member is $95.00.

Boys who are interested in making this adventurous trip should write at once to "Great Western Expeditions," P.O. Box 3404, Los Angeles 54, California, or to Rev. Robert H. Scanland, Pilgrim Congregational Church, 600 North Garey Avenue, Pomona, California. Mr. Scanland is Chairman of the Commission on Christian Education of the National Association of Congregational Christian Churches.

Northeast P. F. Rally the Best Yet

The midwinter rally of the Northeast Pilgrim Fellowship held February 17-19 at the Wachogue Community Congregational Church, Springfield, Massachusetts, demonstrated that the youth work of free Churches in the area is growing by leaps and bounds. Delegates came by bus and private car from many Churches in New York, Connecticut, Massachusetts and Maine, to this newest member-Church of the National Association. The pastor, Rev. Howard E. Munson, and other members of the Wachogue Church had prepared ample entertainment for the group.

Discussion groups on such subjects as dating, the use of leisure time, family relations, and the right use of money were led by competent adult leaders. Discussion of schools and colleges was followed by visits to Western New England College, American International College, and Springfield College, at each of which presidents, deans and registrars talked to the group.

Worship services at the rally were led by various Pilgrim Fellowship groups from the Churches which were represented. The business sessions included discussion of Summer trips for young people, including those to Europe which are to be made under Pilgrim Fellowship auspices. A planning council for the Northeast group is to be held in April at Adams, Massachusetts, and the Spring rally in May will be at Old Saybrook, Connecticut.

Congregational Bookshelf

Rev. Royal G. Davis, Los Angeles, California

An American Congregationalist started the Interfaith Club of Okayama, Japan, after reading the book "The Pilgrimage of Buddhism." Charter members were four Buddhist priests, two Shinto leaders, two Christian laymen, the missionary and his wife. The purpose was to create greater understanding of those ideals which unite men whatever their religious preference.

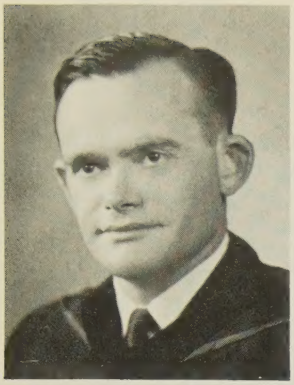
Dr. Charles Burnell Olds calls his book "Love: The Issue." This common concern brought representatives of widely different faiths together and kept them in fellowship. Out of their discussions the missionary developed his mature appreciation for the Christian religion. Another missionary, Hendrik Kraemer, has won international fame for sharply contrasting Christians and the non-Christian world. Dr. Olds does yeoman service by reminding us of the one God who lives and moves and has His being in our entire universe.

With profoundly appealing language, the veteran missionary explains the cosmic, sociological and religious aspects of love as the dominant principle of creation. Love is written into the very fabric of biology. It is the cure for social ills. It reveals the secret of Christ in the Divine plan.

The obvious nobility of the author's ideals and intention makes this a difficult book to criticize. This humanitarian appeal is so great one hesitates to offer a different approach to those things most surely believed. Yet the whole import of these pages is to minimize the essential difference between the Divine and the human. For both Christian and non-Christian love must be lifted to the higher level of adoration and contemplation. Without denying that the Divine is in real senses like us, we must remember that Divine thoughts are most essentially not our thoughts and Divine ways are not necessarily our ways. God is above us, unlike us, outside us, and always beyond us. Love is not the best adjective to describe the fullness of Deity. LOVE: THE ISSUE, Christopher Publishing House, Boston, $3.00.

From the Chairman of the Executive Committee

Rev. John H. Alexander, Wauwatosa, Wisconsin



A letter that I recently received from one of the members of our National Association family contained this sentiment: "It always sets us all up to see all the special friends who have come to mean much to us during these years of struggle." This is just one person's way of saying what all who have attended a National Association meeting know, that the fellowship we share is one of our most blessed possessions. This fellowship is expressed not only in the sense of friendship and Christian concern that bridges the miles that separate us; but also in the significant things we are doing together in order that Christ's Kingdom may become an earthly reality.

Once again, from our mid-winter perspective, we look forward to the Association's Annual Meeting at which you will have a significant opportunity to influence the programs that are carried out during the year by the Executive Committee and the various commissions, for we are the servants of the Churches to do the common work of which you approve. It is not too early to make your plans to be with us in Cheyenne from August 22-24. Our fervent hope is that every member-Church will be represented; and that we will have visitors from the many other Churches that intend to remain Congregational, and to whom we extend a cordial invitation to membership.

The National Association is firmly embarked on its course for the preservation of the faith, fellowship and freedom that we believe to be necessary for vital Christian activity in church and society. We confidently expect that through our fellowship and others of like spirit, Congregationalism will continue to make its significant contributions to the spirit and work of Christ's Church in the world. To this end we covet your support and your prayers.

Lady Doak College, Madura, South India

Miss Katie Wilcox, Chester, Connecticut

Lady Doak College owes its origin to the insistence of the girls of the Madura area of South India that they have a chance to go to college.

In the year 1914 in the city of Madras, 300 miles away, a Christian college for girls had been opened under the auspices of 13 mission Boards doing educational work in South India and the few girls who passed through high schools had been able to find seats there, but this was no longer true. The policy of that one Protestant Christian college was to keep its enrolment small enough to provide for good training for leadership among the first women who would be called upon to be the leaders of their country. The accommodation in this college was very limited. In the year 1945 it turned away 400 worthy applicants for admission into its Freshman class. The situation was really serious. The pleas for another college for girls were worthy of being heeded from the point of view of the girls and also from the point of view of the needs of the country now approaching independence.

Lady Doak College was the answer to this need. It opened its doors to a Freshman class of 82 girls on July 14, 1948. Today it is a four-year college with an enrolment of 450 girls. It has reached the maximum number possible to be accommodated.

The Need And How To Help

In America an organization has been set up called the Lady Doak College Funds Corporation. It is incorporated under the laws of the State of Massachusetts. All funds given to the college go through this organization or directly to the College in Madura as directed by the donor.

Lady Doak College received its first donations from Indian sources alone and in fact was well started on its building program before the first request was made or donation received in America. This in itself is a proof of the desire of the Indian people to have this Christian college established in Madura.

Why The Name

Before you have read thus far I am sure you have been wondering about the name of Lady Doak College. Its name was chosen with good reason and the College is proud to bear it. Lady Doak is an American woman, daughter of a now retired Congregational minister residing in West Brookfield, Massachusetts. She with her parents, the Reverend and Mrs. J. H. Gaylord, taking a trip around the world largely to see Mission work, came through Madura at a time when the Capron Hall High School was in need of a teacher. Helen, now Lady Doak, was persuaded to stay to teach for one year in Capron Hall. While she was teaching there she married a young business man from Scotland who chanced to come to Madurai at the same time. This young couple not only endeared themselves to the Indian people by their friendly and helpful spirit but the public service which was rendered was so great that in later years Mr. Doak, Helen's husband, was knighted by the Government and as he became Sir James, Helen became Lady Doak.

While it is true that both personally and through their friends financial help came to the college and still comes, the reason for the choice of the name lies deeper than that. It was given because of what that name meant and means in India. Helen was one of those far too rare teachers whose influence over her pupils was vital and helpful. After she became Lady Doak with obligations of entertaining distinguished guests in her home she still remembered her more humble friends and they too had their places in her home and heart. Sir James and Lady Doak were people who got behind every good cause and helped it in every possible way. Sir James has now retired from his work in India and the family live in England but they still spend three months of each year in India and still have personal touch with the college and can watch its growth from the little thatched shed buildings to its now more stable and permanent buildings.

Lady Doak College Continued

This is a privilege not possible to others of us deeply interested in and concerned for the welfare of the College, but one which we rejoice is theirs.

Requests for the brochure or to have your names recorded on the mailing list of the Corporation may be sent to Miss Katie Wilcox, Chester, Connecticut. Contributions to the college may be sent through Dr. Howell D. Davies, Treasurer of the Missionary Society of the Congregational Christian Churches, Room 2308, 100 North La Salle Street, Chicago 2, Illinois.

More Churches Vote "No"

Since the March issue of THE CONGREGATIONALIST went to press, twenty-four more Congregational Christian Churches have been reported to us as rejecting the proposed Constitution of the United Church of Christ. Those marked with an asterisk (*) are already members of the National Association.

Illinois: *Oneida, Ontario; *Wataga, First; Monroe Center, Union; *Chicago, Fourth. **Indiana:** Lebanon, New Salem; **Kansas:** Lincoln, First; Ash Rock. **Maine:** Burlington. **Massachusetts:** Haverhill, West; **Michigan:** Highland; Central Lake; *Detroit, First; Pittsford, First. **Nebraska:** Ashland. **New Hampshire:** Alton; Farmington; New Castle. **Ohio:** Lima, Calvary; **Pennsylvania:** Milroy; Guy's Mills; Edwardsville, Bethesda. **Wisconsin:** Milwaukee, North Shore; **Washington,** Maltby. The Church at Carson City, Michigan, has resolved to abstain from voting.

Pastors, clerks or other responsible members of Churches which vote *No* are urged to notify the National Association of the action. The information may be sent either to Rev. F. Willard Kime, 176 West Wisconsin Avenue, Milwaukee 3, Wisconsin, or to the Editor of THE CONGREGATIONALIST, 61 East Street, Melrose 76, Massachusetts. Churches which adopt resolutions that they will take no action on the question of joining the United Church of Christ are also urged to notify us of the action.

Two Corrections: In our March issue the South Main Street Congregational Church, Manchester, N. H., was erroneously listed as having voted NO on the Constitution of the United Church. This Church voted to become a part of the new body. In the same issue, the First Church in Hanson, Massachusetts, was inadvertently omitted from the list of No-voting Churches. This Church is a member of the National Association.

Ordination at Saranac, Michigan. On Sunday February 19, 1961, Howard Elwood Bull, pastor since 1958 of the Saranac Community Church, Saranac, Michigan, was ordained to the ministry. The service followed an examination by a Council of the Churches of the vicinage. The sermon was by Rev. Bruce H. Masselink, D.D. of Grand Rapids, the prayer by Rev. Malcolm K. Burton of Pontiac, and the Charge to the Candidate by Rev. Andrew B. Lemke of Allegan.

Hymnals Wanted. The First Church (Congregational) in Forest City, Iowa, is in need of fifty copies of THE PILGRIM HYMNAL (edition of 1935). Anyone who knows of such being available is requested to write to Miss Evelyn C. Hass or to Dr. John C. Eichorn, Forest City, Iowa.

1761 SERVICE RE-ENACTED

On February 25, 1761, Rev. Nathaniel Whitaker was installed as the first minister of the Second Congregational Church of Norwich, Connecticut. On Sunday afternoon, February 26, 1961, this service was re-enacted in what is now the United Congregational Church in that city. Thanks to the diary kept by one of the 1761 delegates, Jabez Fitch, Jr., and to a copy of the NEW LONDON SUMMARY of February 27, 1761, and the tireless efforts of Mr. Joseph B. Edwardson, Church Historian, it was possible to have a copy of the 200 year old installation sermon by Rev. Benjamin Lord, D.D., of the First Congregational Church of Norwich, and to ascertain who the other ministers were who took part in that service.

Rev. A. Lynn Booth, D.D., present pastor of the First Church, after great and painstaking efforts, had condensed the original sermon, which had taken an hour and a half to preach, into one which retained its substance but could be read in twenty minutes. Dr. Booth read his condensation of the sermon in the service, and other parts were taken by the present pastors of the same Churches which were represented at the vicinage council two centuries ago.

This service was also a recognition service for the new pastor of the United Church, Rev. Myron R. Bunnell. At the morning service the same day there was a dedication of the mahogany communion table which had been the property of the Second Church, prior to its consolidation with the Broadway Church in 1918 to form the present United Congregational Church.

The photograph shows Messrs. Andrew J. Danielson and Richard P. Gregson, deacons; Mrs. Danielson, deaconess; and Rev. Myron R. Bunnell, examining the old table and a chalice and breadplate dating back nearly 150 years.

Two Brooklyn Churches Unite. On February 9, 1961, the formal union of the Flatbush-Tompkins Congregational Church and the Ocean Avenue Congregational Church, both of Brooklyn, New York, took place. The name Flatbush-Tompkins Congregational Church has been retained. Dr. Alfred Grant Walton, pastor of the Flatbush-Tompkins Church, since 1934 will continue as pastor.

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FROM THE LETTER BOX

Editor, THE CONGREGATIONALIST:

As a concerned layman, I have felt that I should set down some of my thoughts on the merger before the time when we should all stand up and be counted.

In the first place, I object to a huge monolithic church. If size alone were the criterion, there would be no need for a merger, since we already have the Roman Church, with its weight of tradition, its claim to Apostolic Succession, and its doctrine of infallibility. Here is everything, made to order! But size alone means little, for we must recall that all the known world was at one time under the control of a single church. Power corrupts and the church was no exception, for the excesses of the church hierarchy led inexorably to the Reformation at the time of Martin Luther. At no time in history has the organized church proved that it could be trusted with great power.

Our worship of bigness is a typical American phenomenon. We seem to feel that anything is better merely by being bigger. So we have bigger cars, bigger homes, bigger jobs, and bigger incomes as an object for our way of life. The thought comes to me whether, if by some turn of fate, we were set down with Christ before Pilate, our obsession with sheer bigness might not lead us to side with the Temple and reject the Christ.

There is no doubt that we shall see mountains of paper issuing from the propaganda mills of the new church, for the Constitution is going to be interpreted early and often and it is probable that it will be more often interpreted than observed. In the case of St. Martin's Church in Maryland, as reported in THE CONGREGATIONALIST, we have a good example of interpretation. After much reading of the Constitution of the United Church, I confess that the members of St. Martin's would seem to have had the right to withdraw. It is evident that the national leaders are still "tithing mint and cummin."

This points out a difference in the basic philosophy between the Congregational and the E & R ways. It is entirely possible that the course of time would find men in control of the U. C. C. Synod who would believe that they had the right to sue any Congregational Church wishing to withdraw. I fail to see how any church can be "United" if one half can be sued while the other half remains secure.

There certainly should be ample room for the small free Churches which choose to stay in the Congregational tradition. It is not yet clear what our relation to the Conferences will be under the new set-up. We shall undoubtedly be subjected to a great deal of pressure for a long time and we may even be looked down on as "cross-eyed stepchildren," yet we must never forget that we have our witness to make, both as individuals and as Churches. Let us therefore witness to our faith with lifted heads and joyful hearts. In the words of the old hymn,

"There's surely somewhere a lowly place
In earth's harvest fields so wide
Where I may labor through life's short day
For Jesus the Crucified."

Cornish Flat, New Hampshire JOSEPH WOODWARD